



SEND Local Offer Annual Report 2015

The SEND Local Offer Annual Report 2015 provides an update of key developments on the Local Offer website since the implementation of the SEND Local Offer on 1st September 2014, including feedback from service users and how this has impacted on the information provided.

Context

The Children and Families Act 2014 brought in widespread changes to the support available to families with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) aged 0-25, requiring these changes to be in place by 1st September 2014.

The changes include the requirement of the Local Authority to develop and/or deliver:

- The SEND Local Offer
- Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans
- Preparation for Adulthood processes which resulted in Lincolnshire's Transitions Pathway
- Personal Budgets
- Effective partnerships with education settings to build the Access, Plan, Do, Review cycle which is known as Graduated Approach, and which resulted in SEN Support replacing the terms School Action and School Action Plus
- Liaise, the SEND Information, Advice and Support Service (formerly Parent Partnership)
- Disagreement resolution and mediation access.

In line with the Children and Families Act 2014 SEND reforms, Lincolnshire's Local Offer has 2 main purposes:

1. to improve information about services and provision available for families, children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, and to make it easier for all families to find this information by making it available in one place
2. that by working directly with families, children and young people on developing the Local Offer, Local Authorities and Health partners will be better informed by the service user to make potential improvements and commission services appropriately.

Lincolnshire's SEND Local Offer aims to meet the information needs of all families living in Lincolnshire, as well as supporting professionals who may be directly working with families across the county.

Note: Throughout the report, reference is made to the SEND Local Offer. For the majority of references, this highlights functionality within the SEND Local Offer itself. The SEND Local Offer sits within the universal Family Services Directory, so some functions such as [Tell Us](#) are available across the site for all site users to provide feedback about services.

Key features of the SEND Local Offer

Lincolnshire County Council used the SEND Code of Practice as a starting point and to underpin developments. A gap analysis following the [SEND Code of Practice](#) was undertaken in order to prepare the site for official launch on 1st September 2014. This mapping work involved specialists from various information strands including education, health and social care, together with parents, children and young people, whose input was pivotal to the work streams of the SEND Local Offer Working Group (see p.3).

The SEND Local Offer sits within the universal Family Services Directory at www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/fsd and has a wide amount of information for families including childcare, local and national support groups and charities, education provision, Children's Centre activities and other leisure opportunities, health, money and social care services.

In addition, the SEND Local Offer has its own website address at www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/SENDLocalOffer, which enables site users to navigate straight to SEND information.

The Family Services Directory and SEND Local Offer is maintained and developed by Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services.

Co-production

Lincolnshire County Council Children's Services carried out a large number of co-production events with service users and young people to understand their information needs. Parents and professionals told us that they wanted:

- information in one place with a knowledgeable telephone service as support
- basket of services and the ability to create personalised lists
- specific information requests including leisure, support groups, activities and where to get additional help and support
- translation and audio functionality
- clear and clean design with lots of white space
- a website that didn't look like another Local Authority website
- clear and helpful information about schools and education providers
- clear and easy to understand pathways of information including the statutory assessment processes.

The Local Authority has continued to meet with families with children and young people with SEND to capture their views about the information available through the site, as well as how the website itself could be improved. We have attended numerous events at special schools, coffee mornings via the Early Support Care Co-ordination (ESCO) team, Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum (LPCF) events, SEND team events and other appropriate opportunities.

The Local Authority also works with professionals so we can promote the SEND Local Offer to them and understand their information needs. We have delivered presentations to Special Educational

Needs Co-ordinators (SENCOs) and teachers, Health Visitors and a number of Children's Services teams.

This work with site users has continued throughout 2015 as we remain committed to on-going site improvements to reorganise some categories and create more useful sub categories.

For example, following feedback about the SEND Local Offer homepage at www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/SENDLocalOffer we have created separate category buttons for [Health](#) and [Social Care](#) and have created a range of new sub filters to try to help people find the information they are looking for.

This constant reorganisation and refinement of the site is a necessity given we are continually growing the information and now have in excess of 5,500 records plus over 100 information pages.

"I would like to say thank you I was able to find what I was looking for very quickly, and getting much better at moving around this website, a lot more simple to use" **Michelle, parent**

SEND Local Offer Working Group

The SEND Local Offer Working Group started in 2014 as a mechanism for bringing together services which are responsible for the key strands of delivery as outlined in the SEND Code of Practice. The aim of the group was to provide strategic oversight of the SEND Local Offer developments and work together to highlight information gaps and opportunities to capture good practice across the county.

The group includes voluntary organisations such as Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum (LPCF), Lincolnshire Carers and Young Carers Partnership (LCYCP) and Children's Links. Liaise, Lincolnshire's SEND Information Advice and Support Service, offer impartial support and challenge and play a key role in all SEND developments. Lincolnshire County Council is represented by the SEND Team, Transitions Officer, Education Psychologists, Children's Commissioning Team, post-16 Learners with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LLDD) support colleagues, Adult's Services, the Social Care Children with Disabilities Team and the Information Team. Health partners include Lincolnshire's Designated Medical Officer, Speech and Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, Paediatric Nurses and representation from Healthwatch.

Members of the group were instrumental in sourcing, writing and enabling directory entries on the SEND Local Offer right from the beginning of the project. The group took a short hiatus once the site launched on 1st September 2014, which allowed users to become familiar with site navigation and content and provide feedback about changes and improvements.

The group reconvened in 2015 and it was agreed that the information gap analysis work and ongoing site development would be most effective if we continued to meet regularly and work together. The Local Offer Working Group goes from strength to strength and hopes to expand its membership accordingly in the future.

Tell Us

The [Tell Us](#) area on the SEND Local Offer website is promoted as one of the key ways to provide feedback about the services and information on the SEND Local Offer. There is also a mechanism for providing feedback about universal information such as childcare and other family services.

The Tell Us area also links to *You Said, We Did* as well as the [Where can my child or my family get support?](#) page, which breaks down the '*Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Information and Support*' leaflet from the SEND Team.

In addition, anyone wanting to make a comment, compliment or complaint can contact the Family Information Service or can download the '*FSD I Can't Find..*' flyer on the Tell Us page. This is particularly useful for professionals if they are meeting families who want to make a comment about the services they use or would like to access.

In addition, each directory entry or information page has a 'Report a problem' button on the right hand side. This could be a problem with an incorrect phone number or email address, and can equally be used to offer feedback about that particular service.

All comments, compliments and complaints come into Children's Services who ensure they are passed to the appropriate service. Appropriate action is taken and suggested changes are made where possible. A response is provided to the sender if contact details are supplied and the response is presented on the Local Offer.

You Said, We Did

The comments we have received from website users are available on the [You Said, We Did](#) page on the SEND Local Offer and are divided into the following broad areas:

- Visual
- Functionality
- General
- Information

Examples:

You Said	We Did
Various comments and feedback received re: the Local Offer category button entitled 'Something isn't as expected and diagnosis'	We changed the category button to 'Where do I start with SEND?'
I've tried to search via the A-Z and I can't see on first glance of the list if it's Local Offer.	We've now sorted this out by adding the local offer logo next to listing results.
Whilst using the 'What's On Guide' I found there wasn't a way for me to search by age, I had to go on each activity and see if it was age appropriate for my child. Is there anything you can do to make it easier?	We completely agree and have now added an 'age range' filter. This can be found on the right hand side of the page!

Miscellaneous comments	<p>Following suggestions from varying focus groups we have since added the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lincolnshire Sport activity finder on all relevant sport and leisure pages NHS widget on all relevant Health pages <p>Link to the Lincolnshire County Council 'Admission to School' page on all relevant school pages</p>
I'm looking for childcare out of Lincolnshire but can't find this through your FSD	We added the national Family and Childcare Trust Childcare Finder website to all our childcare pages - it's the pick button on the left that says 'Find childcare in neighbouring areas'
I was told that the swimming pool in Gainsborough has a specific swimming session/group for children with a disability. I can't however find any information on this. Are you aware of the facility and if so please could I have the details.	We have had a look round and found a service provider in Gainsborough see Additional Needs Swimming Record .

For more examples please go to the webpage, which sits within the [Tell Us](#) area of the SEND Local Offer.

Your Say and Getting Involved

Lincolnshire County Council also recognise how important it is for families with children and young people with SEND to be able to find the other ways in which they can make their views heard. We recognise that sometimes this is easier to do directly to the service or other organisation the family is working with.

We recently developed the [Your Say and Getting Involved](#) area on the SEND Local Offer which pulls together various forums, advisory groups, advocacy services and other means of making comments, compliments or complaints.

The page currently includes a link to the CQC/Ofsted consultation on their proposals for inspecting how local areas are meeting their responsibilities to disabled children and young people, and those with special educational needs (SEND). The consultation ran until January 2016 accessed directly via <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-area-send-consultation>

Commissioning

The SEND Local Offer links closely to the Children's Commissioning teams so that there is a clear relationship between information, commissioned contracts and the views and service needs of families with children and young people with SEND.

All children's services commissioned by Lincolnshire County Council are required to complete information for the Family Services Directory and/or SEND Local Offer (depending on whether they are a universal or SEND-specific service), and the feedback mechanisms within the SEND Local Offer website.

Further information about Lincolnshire County Council's commissioning role can be seen in the [Joint Commissioning Framework for Children and Young People with SEND](#) document.

Access to information

One of the key points in the SEND Code of Practice was that although the SEND Local Offer should be available as a website, it must be more than a directory and should be available in other formats upon request. One of the early pieces of feedback from focus groups supported this approach. The focus group said a knowledgeable phone service would be helpful support for anyone struggling to find information or for those needing a bit more guidance on how to find something, particularly for those who may not have access to the internet.

The [Family Information Service](#) (FIS) were already using the information on the universal Family Services Directory website to support enquiries before the SEND Local Offer was published; this is part of the earlier Information Duty from the Childcare Act 2006 which references an on-line directory of services. This web site was cleaned up and enhanced when we incorporated the SEND Local Offer in 2014; therefore the Family Information Service team are ideally placed to continue to offer telephone enquiry support.

The FIS team are able to support enquiries about: finding childcare, children's services, leisure activities and becoming a childcarer, together with a whole host of other family information including referral to SEND disagreement resolution, mediation and independent support.

In addition, they also take initial enquiries for [Liaise, Lincolnshire's SEND Information, Advice and Support Service](#). If the enquirer needs more than information or help to find a service, they are passed to one of the Liaise caseworkers who can support them with SEND legal information, form filling, support in raising complaints about health, education and care relating to SEND, school admissions and exclusions. One of Liaise's key roles is to support a family in resolving disputes informally.

To contact either the FIS or Liaise, call 0800 195 1935 (Monday - Friday 8am - 6pm) or see their webpages for more information. Liaise also have their own [website](#) with additional resources for families.

Other SEND Reform review mechanisms

SEND Team

Following the implementation of the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Reforms on the 1st September 2014 Lincolnshire County Council SEND Team agreed, with families and partners, to hold monthly EHC Working Group Meetings and to undertake regular full reviews of the new EHC processes and related documentation. These continual scrutiny groups will assess what is working well, what is not working well and identify any actions to ensure the continued improvement and ongoing development of high standards within the SEND service delivery for children, young people and families in Lincolnshire.

The report from the 2015 review is available on the SEND Local Offer.

In addition, individual families are invited to complete feedback forms about the Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan process. Very few have been returned to date so the SEND Team is creating a feedback postcard that they are hoping will be more user-friendly and will encourage a greater response.

Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum (LPCF)

Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum (LPCF) has:

Incorporated a function within their website to allow families to give feedback on any questions or issues they may have, as well as positive stories they may wish to share. Together with LPCF, we will establish protocols to ensure such information is input onto the Local Offer 'Tell Us' tab of the website which will also host a 'You Said, We Did' section.

Through a Grant Agreement, LPCF will work in partnership with Lincolnshire County Council and other stakeholders to ensure that parent carers are kept informed and regularly updated with regard to SEND reforms. This will include scheduled information events across the county, regular newsletters and bulletins, web hosting and direct marketing to the organisation's database of parent carers. ([Joint Commissioning Framework for Children and Young People with SEND](#), p.18)

LPCF regularly share their Coffee Morning reports which are available on their own [website](#).

In addition, LPCF are long standing members of the SEND Local Offer Working Group and feed comments into the process around gap analysis and information improvements.

POET - [Personal Outcomes Evaluation Tool \(POET\)](#)

Over autumn 2015 Lincolnshire was one of 70 participating Local Authorities to take part in a survey to find out how Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans and Personal Budgets are working for children and young people nationally.

[In Control](#), the organisation that have been funded by the Department of Education to undertake this survey along with the help of children, young people, families and practitioners from across the country, devised questionnaires for people to complete about the EHC plan process and, in some cases, Personal Budgets and related outcomes.

By the end of the given time, Lincolnshire submitted 51 parents/carers surveys, 56 practitioners and 60 children and young people surveys. Locally, we will use the results of this survey to monitor how we are doing and how we can make improvements.

The information will also be used in a national report to help improve the way things are done for others across England. This national report will be published in spring 2016 and will then be uploaded onto Lincolnshire's SEND Local Offer.

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